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Washington





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WASHINGTON

ADAPTED FOR A CRISIS.

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE

MINNESOTA COMMANDERY

OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE

LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES,

IN HALL OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, STATE CAPITOL, ST. PAUL

FEBRUARY 22, 1889.

BY

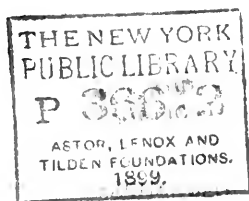
EDWARD D. NEILL, D.D.,

Late Chaplain First Minnesota Infantry, U. S. Vols.

ST. PAUL, MINN.:

THE PIONEER PRESS COMPANY

1889.



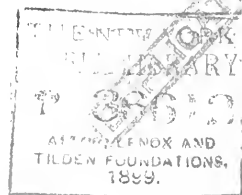
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WASHINGTON

ADAPTED FOR A CRISIS.

A grand face in the painting of an "old master" is sometimes obscured by the halo with which the artist has encircled the head. The effort at exaltation has proved a deterioration. Excessive adulation of Washington at the beginning of the present century lifted him, as the Greeks did their heroes, into the clouds; and the apotheosis distorted him into a prodigy, and detracted from his real greatness.

Fontanes, in an oration before Napoleon and the civic and military authorities of Paris, under a misconception, spoke of him as "born in opulence, which he largely increased." If he had been cradled in luxury the anniversary of his birth would not be celebrated to day in the great republic which extends from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, and from the Lake of the Woods to the Gulf of Mexico. His birthplace was in a house of few rooms, with no superfluous furniture, and as plain in its surroundings as the homes of some of the early settlers of Minnesota. When he was eleven years of age his mother was a widow, and his education was chiefly obtained from an accomplished convict who had been transported and sold for a servant.¹ His first ancestors in Virginia made no pretensions. All that Washington knew of his English relatives was that they lived in one of the northern counties of England, and he would have been astonished at

1. The learned clergyman, Jonathan Boucher, who was the private tutor of Washington's stepson, in his autobiography, portions of which have been published in *London Notes and Queries*, writes as follows: "Mr. Washington was the second of five sons, of parents distinguished neither for their rank nor their fortune. Lawrence, their eldest son, became a soldier and went on the expedition to Carthage, when, getting into some scrape with a brother officer, it was said he did not acquit himself quite so well as he ought and sold out.

"George, who like most people thereabouts at that time, had no other education than reading, writing and accounts which he was taught by a convict servant."

the positive but mythical declarations of some modern historians that the emigrant head of his family was a brother of Sir Henry Washington, a friend of Charles the First.¹ His mother was poor, and anxious for his welfare. The country was sparsely settled; there were no large stores where clerks were employed; no populous towns; for Virginia planters purchased their supplies in England, which were brought to their landings by the same vessels which carried away their tobacco. At one time she thought her son might become one of those who "go down to the sea in ships, and that do business in great waters;" but her brother, hearing of her design, wrote: "I understand you are advised and have some thoughts of putting your son to sea. I think he had better be apprenticed to a trade, for a common sailor before the mast has by no means the common liberty. They will press him from a ship where he has fifty shillings and make him take twenty-three and cut or treat him like a negro or a dog."²

Fortunately, his boyhood was under the general supervision of William Fairfax, who, when a young man, had struggled with limited means, and after an eventful career was collector of customs at Salem, Mass., and in that Puritan town had married a fine woman.³ When this man came to Virginia to live his son became Washington's friend and associate, and with him when he was only sixteen years of age he made his first surveying expedition.

Before Washington attained to manhood he exhibited strong characteristics. Beneath great reserve was hidden tender emotions and a fiery temper. While unobtrusive, when there was necessity he displayed decision. He had no adaptation for boon companionship with the dissolute sons of planters at a wayside tavern, but enjoyed the company of refined women. Before he was twenty years of age Cupid pierced his heart with an arrow, but he was not accepted by

1. J. L. Chester, D.C.L., LL.D., the careful annotator of the Westminster Abbey Register, passed the last twenty years of his life in trying to find the place in England from which the first Virginia Washington emigrated, and failed.

John Washington, the great-grandfather of the general, came to Virginia about 1658 and brought with him a wife and two children. He married, after his first wife's death, the widow of Walter Brodhurst, whose maiden name was Anne Pope. Her son Lawrence became the grandfather of George Washington.

2. Bishop Meade's "Old Parishes of Virginia."

3. William Fairfax was collector of Salem, Mass., from 1728 to 1733, and his last wife was Deborah, the daughter of John Clark, of that town.—*N. E. Hist. Register*, 1877.

the fair one.¹ During the French war, while in the field, he wrote to another "that he would be happy if he thought he could ever play Juba to Marcia," in Addison's play of Cato.²

The object of this address is simply to show the wonderful adaptation of Washington to critical periods. By the time he was twenty-

1. A few years ago Gov. Fitzhugh Lee, of Virginia, published the following letter to William Fauntleroy: (The spelling is preserved.)

"May 20, 1752.

"Sir: I should have been down long before this, but my business in Frederick detained me somewhat longer than I expected and immediately upon my return from thence I was taken with a violent pleurisy which has reduced me very low, but purpose as soon as I recover my strength, to wait on Miss Betsy in hopes of a revocation of the former cruel sentence and see if I can meet with any alteration in my favor. I have inclosed a letter to her, which should be much obliged to you for the delivery of it. I have nothing to add but my best respects to your good lady and family and last I am sir, Your most obedient, humble servant,

G. WASHINGTON."

2. Washington had known the widow Custis before he went to the French and Indian war, but there was a Mary Cary, whom he would have married if her father had been willing. His sister Sarah had married his associate, George W. Fairfax. To Mrs Fairfax he avows his love for her sister in a letter from camp, at Cumberland, dated twelfth September, 1758. In it he writes: "If you allow that any honor can be derived from my opposition to our present system of management, you destroy the merit of it entirely in me by attributing my anxiety to the animating prospects of possessing Mrs. Custis, whom I need not name, guess yourself, should not my honor and the country's welfare be the excitement?"

"Tis true, I profess myself a votary of love. I acknowledge that a lady is in the case, and further, I confess the lady is known to you. Yes, madam, as well as she is to one who is too sensible of her charms to deny the power, whose influence he feels, and must ever submit to. I feel the force of her amiable beauty in the recollection of a thousand tender passages."

Soon after this he received a letter from Mrs. George Fairfax's sister Mary and on the twenty-fifth of September he replied, and after giving the army news and the death in battle of some officers she knew, he continues: "Thus it is the lives of the brave are often disposed of; but who is there that does not rather envy than regret a death that gives birth to honor and glorious memory! * * * I should think our time more agreeably spent, believe me, in playing a part in Cato with the company you mention, and myself doubly happy in being the Juba to such a Marcia as you must make."

Mary Cary's father did not wish her to marry a poor man. He was like Cato in Addison's tragedy, and she an obedient Marcia.

"While Cato lives, his daughter has no right to love or hate, but as his choice directs."

Many passages in the play are exceedingly appropriate to one in Washington's situation. Juba, a Roman military officer, falls in battle—*Act IV, Scene 3d.*

Marcia—Why do I think on what he was? He's dead! He's dead, and never knew how much I loved him.

Juba—Where am I? do I live, or am indeed what Marcia thinks? All is Elysium around me.

Marcia—Ye dear remains of the most loved of men!

Nor modesty nor virtue here forbid

A last embrace, while they—

Juba—See, Marcia! See!

The happy Juba lives! He lives to catch

That dear embrace, and to return it too,

With wonted warmth and eagerness of love.

one years of age he had inspired such confidence in the governor of Virginia that he was selected to bear an important letter to the commander of the French posts on the tributaries of the Ohio river. While he was preparing for his journey the then commander, Pierre Paul Marin, was expiring; and when he arrived at the post on French creek, not far from Lake Erie, he found a new officer, Legardeur Saint Pierre. Both of these were natives of Canada, knew nothing of the splendor of Paris, had passed their lives among Indians, and each had for a time lived at the post on the shores of Lake Pepin, opposite Maiden's Rock.¹ Washington's visit removed all doubt as to the intention of France to establish a cordon of posts to prevent English immigration. The report of the exploration increased confidence in his good judgment, and the next May he was in command of an advance party to prevent aggression.

At this period he first manifested the decision which fitted him for leadership in a critical era. The captain of an independent company attached to his force held a commission in the British army, while his was only from the governor of Virginia, with less pay. The regular officer was a martinet, and assumed superiority. His course was such that discontent pervaded the camp, and Washington wrote to the governor "that if he could not have the same emolument as officers of the same rank from Great Britain he would not resign in the face of the enemy, but would serve as a volunteer; for as my services as far as I have knowledge will equal with those of the best officers, I make it a point of honor not to serve for less."²

After this campaign Great Britain was convinced that some of the best troops must be sent over to protect the frontier, and Edward Braddock was designated as commander-in-chief of his majesty's forces in North America. About the first of March, 1755, he landed at Hampton, and from thence rode up to the capitol of Virginia to visit Gov. Dinwiddie.

1. Peter Paul Marin was born March 19, 1692, and in 1718 was married to Marie Guyon. In 1749 he was in charge of the French post at Frontenac, Minn., on the shores of Lake Pepin opposite Maiden's Rock. He died at the post on French creek, near Erie, Pa., on the twenty-ninth of October, 1753, and was buried there. In a few days Legardeur Saint Pierre assumed command. He was the son of Paul Legardeur, and was born in 1701. His grandfather married Marguerite, daughter of Jean Nicolet, who, in 1634, was the first white man to visit Green Bay, Wis. He was in command on the shores of Lake Pepin, Minn., 1735 to 1737.

2. *Dinwiddie Papers*—vol. III, Virginia Hist. Col., pp. 178, 179.

Williamsburg at this period contained about eight hundred people, including negroes. A broad street extended through the town, with the college of William and Mary at one extremity and the capitol at the other. Not more than ten or twelve families had any education, and the rest were illiterate artisans or small traders living in poor houses. It was only during court week or a session of the legislature that the streets contained carriages of every kind the worse for use and lack of varnish, drawn by horses seldom of the same color, with African coachmen as ragged as beggars, containing the ladies from the surrounding plantations.

Never before had been greater excitement than on the day when Gen. Braddock and staff rode through the little town to the governor's residence. A few days later, Braddock was at a dinner party given by St. Clair, his quartermaster general, and among the guests was the shy and silent Washington; but by his bearing and conversation he attracted the general from England and a lasting friendship was formed. One of the guests wrote the next day: "Is Mr. Washington among your acquaintances? If not, I must recommend you to embrace the first opportunity to form his friendship. He is about twenty-three years of age, with a countenance both mild and pleasant, promising both wit and judgment. He is of a comely and dignified demeanor, and at the same time displays much self-reliance and decision. He strikes me as being a young man of an extraordinary and exalted character, and is destined, I am of opinion, to make no inconsiderable figure in our country."¹

After that dinner party, Washington rendered valuable assistance to Braddock. As long as the waters of the Monongahela flow, the inhabitants on its banks will always consider the ninth of July, 1755, as a black day. By the advice of Washington the advance of the British forces, with wagons and artillery, had been hurried on, so as to surprise and capture Fort Duquesne. The troops of Gage and St. Clair led the way. After noon they halted, suspecting no evil, in a valley, when the crack of musketry from wooded hills, followed by the war-whoop of savages, heard for the first time by the soldiers just arrived in America, told that the enemy was in ambush. The concealed party consisted of seventy-two regular French, one hundred and forty-five

1. Peyton's "*Reminiscences*."

Canadians, and six hundred and thirty-seven Indians. De Beaujeu, the leader of the whites, had served in the valley of the Wisconsin river, was dressed as an Indian chief, and was soon killed. He who planned the surprise and led the Indians was De Langlade, whose family lived west of Lake Michigan.¹

No troops, under the circumstances, could have done better than the British. Their artillery could not be elevated to work effectively, and could only make a noise. The unseen foe and unearthly yell was confusing, and Braddock, to inspire confidence, attended by Washington, rode to the front and received a mortal wound. Gov. Sharpe of Maryland mentions that the firing on the advance commenced about one o'clock in the afternoon, and under date of Sept. 15, 1755, wrote: "Gen. Braddock, thro' the impatience of the young people about him, as 'tis said, hurried on too fast." "Had the general used less dispatch in marching to Duquesne's the result might have been different." Mortification at the defeat by a small body of French led to much harsh criticism, but it was impossible for troops guarding artillery and a wagon train to dodge behind trees filled with savages, and they stuck to their guns as long as they could. Washington conducted the retreat, and in a few days Braddock expired; and the chaplain having been wounded, he read the burial service over the remains of one he had learned to respect for his bravery.

After the French war, having been married to a most amiable and domestic woman, he lived for several years in comparative retirement, occupied with the duties and recreations of a country gentleman. The closing of the port of Boston by an act of parliament again awakened his interest in public affairs, and he did not hesitate to approve of a congress of the colonies for the purpose of remonstrance.

1. Charles de Langlade was born in 1729, and on Aug. 12, 1754, was married at Mackinaw to Charlotte Bourassa.

Gen. Burgoyne, in *State of the Expedition for Canada*, mentioned him as "the very man who, with these tribes, projected and executed Braddock's defeat."

Anburey, an officer under Burgoyne, writes in *Journey in the Interior of North America*, that M. de Langlade "is the person who, at the head of the tribes which he now commands, planned and executed the defeat of Gen. Braddock."

Langlade died in 1800 and his grave may be seen in the old cemetery of Green Bay, Wis. His nephew, Gautier de Verville, was with him in the attack upon Braddock, and his daughter married Harry Monro Fisher, at Prairie du Chien. Fisher's mother was the wild and reckless daughter of Harry Monro, chaplain of a Highlander regiment during the French and English war.

On his way as a delegate to that congress, which on the fifteenth of September, 1774, was to assemble in Philadelphia, he met at the Potomac river a Tory clergyman who had been the tutor of his stepson, who expressed regret that one so prudent should attend a meeting whose proceedings would lead to civil war. With unusual earnestness he replied that he would never be found advocating any measures to produce blood-shedding.¹

He had not long sat in that congress before the debates indicated that there would be no peaceable adjustment.

When he returned it was not very long before he urged the forming of a military company in Fairfax county. In May, 1775, he was a delegate to the second Continental congress, and his colleagues now would talk of little else except the collision between the king's troops and the people of Concord and Lexington, Mass., which had occurred in April, and all felt that a crisis had arrived. But what could be done in their weakness? Who could organize the yeomanry so ready to bear arms? Where was the person of any military experience fit to lead? Intuitively congress felt that one of their own body was the man, and on the sixteenth of June it was unanimously voted that George Washington should be the general of the Continental army. With great diffidence he accepted the command; and, without going back to his home left the city and was escorted northward a short distance by the Philadelphia Light Horse, commanded by Capt. Abram Markoe, the grandfather of an old and respected citizen of St. Paul. In a few days he was established in camp at Cambridge, Mass., and by his method, energy and prudence inspired confidence.

1. Boucher, in his Autobiography, writes: "I happened to be going across the Potomac with my wife and some other of our friends, exactly at the time that Gen. Washington was crossing it on his way to the northward. There had been a great meeting of the people and great doings in Alexandria on the occasion and everybody seemed to be on fire, either with rum or patriotism, or both. Some patriots in our boat huzzaed and gave three cheers to the general as he passed us, while Mr. Addison and myself contented ourselves with pulling off our hats. The general (then only colonel) beckoned us to stop, as we did, just to shake us by the hand, he said.

"His behavior to me was, as it had always been, polite and respectful, and I shall forever remember what passed in the few disturbed moments of conversation we then had. From his going on his present errand I foresaw and apprised him of much that has since happened; in particular that there would certainly be a civil war and that the Americans would soon declare for independency.

"With more earnestness than was usual with his great reserve, he scouted my apprehensions, adding, and I believe with perfect sincerity, that if ever I heard of his joining in such measures I had his leave to set him down for everything wicked."

It has been said that he lacked dash. It was well he did. It was no time for dash. The troops were chiefly on short enlistments with inexperienced officers, while the enemy was a force of veterans supported by a fleet. His generalship was shown in imprisoning the British in the cities which they occupied.

Recently parliament has published some dispatches of Gen. Gage in September, 1775, to the English government, which show the situation. He wrote: "No intention to march out from Boston to an attack, as it would be impossible, even if they had a victory, to make any use of it, having no apparatus to advance into the country."

Three years later a secret dispatch was sent to Sir Henry Clinton: "If you should find it impracticable to bring Mr. Washington to a general and decisive action, relinquish the idea of carrying on operations against the rebels on land."¹

Once only, contrary to the advice of a council of war, he insisted upon an immediate attack; and when he found his troops falling back, throwing off his reserve, his eyes flashing with indignation, he rode to the front and checked what might have proved a disaster. La Fayette, many years after this occurrence, wrote: "At Monmouth I commanded a division, and it may be supposed was pretty well occupied; still I took time, amid the roar and confusion of the conflict, to admire our beloved chief, who rode along the lines, mounted on a splendid charger, amid the shouts of soldiers, cheering them by his voice and example, and restoring the fortunes of the fight. I thought then, as now, that I never had beheld so superb a man."

To this day no American patriot passes the substantial stone mansion which was Washington's headquarters² during the winter the army was encamped at Valley Forge, but sad thoughts arise. Here the commander must have recalled the Gethsemane, where the Divine Teacher endured agony and the desertion of friends. At the very hour that the army had no beef and only twenty-five barrels of flour, politicians attempted to conduct the

1. Vol. IX., Appendix, Part 3d, of Report to Parliament of *Manuscript Historical Commission*.

2. This stone mansion has been purchased by the women of Pennsylvania, as a Memorial Hall. It was owned at this time by Isaac Potts. His brother Thomas was colonel of a battalion in 1776. Another brother, James, was a major. A third brother was Jonathan, surgeon of Philadelphia Light Horse Company, and medical director in the army. His sister Elizabeth, while the troops were at Valley Forge, married Dr. Benjamin Duffield, a surgeon in charge of a military hospital.

war and remonstrated against his going into winter quarters. In a communication to congress, with a touch of sarcasm, he wrote that his forces had not seen soap nor vinegar since the battle of Brandywine; and added "that they had little occasion for soap, as few had more than one shirt, many a part of one, and some none at all." About one-third of the army were unfit for duty because they were barefoot. He regretted that congress should act as if the soldiers were "made of stocks and stones, and insensible to frost and snow," and assured them "that it was easier to draw a remonstrance in a comfortable room and by a good fire than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow without clothes or blankets." In addition to distress for his soldiers he was called to endure another heart pang. Ambitious, conceited, and restless officers had gained the ear of prominent civilians. Conway, of Irish descent, wishing higher rank, was discontented; and, combining with others, a movement was begun to drive Washington from the command by circulating reports that he was too slow, and not fit to lead. When he discovered the cabal he was equal to the emergency, and wrote "that he did not solicit the command, but accepted it after much entreaty, with all that diffidence which a conscious want of ability and experience impart. There is not an officer in the service of the United States that would return to the sweets of domestic life with more heartfelt joy than I should, but I mean not to shrink in the cause." Soon after the intrigue was discovered Conway received a wound in a duel, supposed to be fatal, and "just able to hold a pen," wrote to Washington expressing sincere grief for what he had said, done, or written.

There was another critical period during the war when he showed that he was the man for the place.

After the treason of the money-loving Benedict Arnold, the British officers were deceived and made to believe that Washington could be bought with a price, and the army disintegrated by sowing seeds of discontent. In a letter to Lord George Germain toward the close of 1780, it is mentioned that "Washington is certainly to be bought; honors will do it; that Arnold had been received with open arms, and that there was a freedom as well as propriety in his conversation and behavior."

Under the delusion that the army could be broken up, emissaries appeared among the private soldiers. Upon New Year's night of

1781, while the American camp was at Morristown, N. J., two regiments, chiefly composed of poor Irishmen, mutinied, and under their non-commissioned officers, marched out of camp. As the troops had not been paid for a year, and they needed food and clothing, the disaffection began to spread to other regiments. Washington was equal to the emergency, and by firmness and conciliatory measures checked the spread of the revolt. Vice Admiral Arbuthnot of the British navy wrote to England:¹ "A revolt happened in Mr. Washington's camp on the first instant, and inspired us with hopes that the crisis of the rebellion was approaching. A resolution of congress relative to the continuance of enlistments has occasioned universal disaffection. The Pennsylvania line flew to arms, and in the attempt to reduce them many, both officers and privates, were slain. Headed by a Sergt. Williams, formerly of Burgoyne's army, they withdrew from camp, and about 2,000 took post near Bordentown, in Jersey, on advantageous ground, defended by seven pieces of cannon. Their object was payment in hard money, with provision to retire to their respective homes. The moment the intelligence reached us, Sir Henry Clinton and myself made every effort to improve the event to our advantage. Affairs remained in an unsettled state until the fifteenth instant, when Mr. Washington, whatever difficulties at first opposed, was admitted as a mediator, and they dispersed upon condition of being paid with paper in proportion of seventy to one, with leave to return to their dwellings and a promise that congress would pass an act of oblivion and pardon for all offenses since the first of the month."²

While Washington was in camp at Morristown the captain of the guard at headquarters was of the same family as a late citizen of Minnesota, whose name has been given to Steele county. In a letter, which has been preserved, he describes the wife of the general, and

1. Vol. IX., Appendix, Part 3d, of Report to Parliament of *Manuscript Historical Commission*.

2. Bancroft, in *History of the United States*, Vol. V., edition of 1888, writes of this mutiny that two emissaries sent by Sir Henry Clinton with tempting offers "were given up by the mutineers, and after trial were hanged as spies. * * * * Troops of New Jersey, whose ranks, next to the Pennsylvania line, included the largest proportion of foreign born, showed signs of being influenced by the bad example, but Washington interposed. The twenty regiments of New England in the Continental service had equal reasons for discontent, but they were almost every one of them native American freeholders or their sons. A detachment of them, marching through deep snows and over mountainous roads, repressed the incipient revolt."

writes: "I am happy in the importance of my charge, as well as in the presence of the most amiable woman on earth."¹

A final crisis occurred after hostilities ceased, and when the army was at Newburg, N. Y., great dissatisfaction prevailed because congress had not made provision for the long-due pay of officers. Some one so far forgot himself as to suggest that the army should create a limited monarchy and make Washington its king. A little later an anonymous call for a meeting of officers was circulated, ending with this language: "Appeal for justice to the fears of government, and suspect *the man* who would advise forbearance."

1. Capt. John Steele, with the army at Morristown, N. J., wrote from headquarters, June 14, 1780, the following letter to his brother William, the ancestor of the late Franklin Steele, who for years was one of the most prominent citizens of Minnesota:

"Dear Will: I have omitted several opportunities of writing, with a daily expectation of seeing you and my brother Jake, which I now cease to hope for, as we have taken the field for several days in consequence of a sudden and unexpected incursion of the enemy from Staten Island into Jersey, who have as usual committed the most cruel and wanton depredations, by burning and destroying the houses and property of many peaceable and defenseless inhabitants; but the most striking instance of their barbarity was in taking the life of a most amiable lady, wife of Parson Caldwell, of Springfield, who left nine small children, the youngest eight months old which sat on its mamma's lap a witness of the cruel murder, though insensible of its loss; nor did their barbarity end there, for after several skirmishes, in which it is thought we killed one hundred and fifty and a proportionable number wounded, together with several officers, they retired to Elizabethtown Point, where they remain fortifying, and possess themselves of part of the town; and 'tis said that two nights ago they made an indiscriminate sacrifice to their brutish appetites of all the ——— in the place. * * * Yesterday a captain from the British army deserted to us, the cause to me unknown, but he is beyond doubt a ——— rascal; but it all conspires to make infamous the once dreaded, though ignominious, arms of Britain.

"I at present enjoy myself incomparably well in the family of Mrs. Washington, whose guard I have had the honor to command since the absence of the general and the rest of the family, which is now six or seven days. I am happy in the importance of these charges, as well as in the presence of the most amiable woman on earth; whose character, should I attempt to describe, I could not do justice to, but will only say that I think it unexceptionable.

"The first and second nights after I came it was expected that a body of the enemy's horse would pay us a visit, but I was well prepared to receive them, for I had not only a good detachment of well disciplined troops under my command, but four members of congress who became volunteers with their muskets, bayonets and ammunition. I assure you they discovered a greater share of spirit than you ever saw in that body, or perhaps will ever see as long as they exist.

"I leave you to judge whether there is not considerable merit due their commander. I only wish I had a company of them to command for a campaign and if you would not see an alteration in the constitution of our army by next ——— I would suffer to lose my ears and never command congressmen again. The rations they have consumed considerably overbalance all their service done as volunteers, for they have dined with me every day since, almost, and drank as much wine as they would earn in six months.

"Make my best love to my dear sister Betsey, parents, brothers and sisters, as well as to all my good neighbors, but in a most particular manner to somebody I can't write to for fear of miscarriage. I am,

Your affectionate brother,

JACK STEELE."

"HEADQUARTERS, MORRISTOWN, June 14, 1780.

Washington knew he was the man pointed at, and with consummate tact issued an order referring to the anonymous paper, and calling a meeting of the higher officers for a certain day. At the time appointed the officers assembled, Gen. Gates in the chair. Washington soon came, and holding a paper with a trembling hand, in a tremulous voice read an address, in which he conjured them to express "their detestation and horror of the man who wickedly attempts to open the floodgates of civil discord." Before he concluded everyone who had given ear to evil suggestions was ashamed, and before they adjourned the officers thanked him for his timely words, and "rejected with disdain the proposition in the anonymous call."

As soon as the pressure of war was removed a segregation began. Each year the public credit diminished. The American people ceased to be respected by the nations of the world. Washington, with deep regret, acknowledged the existing government as "limping, half-starved, moving upon crutches and tottering at every step." In a letter to a friend, he wrote, with emotion, it is an "awful crisis."

When it was decided that there should be a convention in Philadelphia on the fourteenth of May, 1787, to devise some method for the more perfect union of the states, he consented to be one of the delegates from Virginia. At that time the city founded by William Penn was the greatest in wealth and population in North America, and under the influence of the Society of Friends, its inhabitants were distinguished for quietness and general sobriety. On Sunday, toward evening, which was the day before the time designated, Washington reached the suburbs. The intelligence flew to the extreme corners of the city. The church bells forgot their Sunday decorum, and rang as on a marriage occasion. The inhabitants threw open the windows of the houses to extend congratulations, and the devout, as they retired to sleep, knelt, and prayed that Washington and his colleagues might devise some plan to perpetuate American liberty. There is no time to dwell on the proceedings of that convention. By a unanimous voice Washington was chosen as the presiding officer, and after careful and secret deliberations, on the seventeenth of September they presented to the people of the United States of America the result of their deliberations, a constitution which recognized a duplex government, a general government supreme in certain specified affairs, and state governments harmoniously working with it. Neither Wash-

ington nor his colleagues thought it a perfect document. They would have shrank from the utterances of Gladstone, that "it is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time, by the brain and purpose of man." It was a document that separated religion and civil government by requiring no religious test for office. Washington, in a treaty made with the approval of the United States senate, declared that "the government was not in any sense founded upon the Christian religion.

Although he did not partake of the holy communion in the church of his fathers,¹ yet he was a firm believer in a superintending Providence and the divine revelation contained in the Old and New Testament writings. A majority of the framers of the constitution felt that the only true religion was Christianity, but with William Penn they were fully convinced that one-half of the trouble of the stormy period of Charles the First resulted from the clergy trying to shape the political policy of the state, or by the civil authorities attempting to prescribe a religion for men. They had noticed that religious ideas stamped upon the Spanish coin did not improve Spanish morals, and it was reverence for the highest interests of man that led them

1. A letter from Dr. James Abercrombie, the assistant minister of the church he attended in Philadelphia, is conclusive on this point. It was written some years before his death, to a friend.

"Sir: With respect to the inquiry you make, I can only state the following facts, that as pastor of the Episcopal church (an humble assistant to its rector the Rt. Rev. Dr. White), observing that on Sacrament Sundays Gen. Washington, immediately after the desk and pulpit services, went out with the greatest part of the congregation, always leaving Mrs. Washington with the communicants, she invariably being one, I considered it my duty, in a sermon on Public Worship, to state the unhappy tendency of example, particularly of those in elevated stations, who invariably turned their backs upon the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

"I acknowledge the remark was intended for the president, and as such he received it. A few days after, in conversation with a senator of the United States, I believe, he told me that he had dined the day before with the president, who in the course of conversation at the table said that on the preceding Sunday he had received a very just reproof from the pulpit, for always leaving the church before the administration of the Sacrament; that he honored the preacher for integrity and candor; that he never had considered the influence of his example; that he would never again give cause for the repetition of the reproof, and that as he had never been a communicant, were he to become one then it would be imputed to an ostentatious display of religious zeal. Accordingly he afterwards never came on the morning of Sacrament Sunday, though at other times a constant attendant in the morning.

"That Washington was a professing Christian is evident from his regular attendance in our church, but, sir, I can not consider any man a real Christian who uniformly disregards an ordinance so solemnly enjoined by the Divine Author of our holy religion.

"This, sir, is all I think it proper to state on paper. In conversation more latitude may be allowed, more light might perhaps be thrown upon it. I trust, sir, you will not intrude my name in print. I am, sir, Yours,

JAMES ABERCROMBIE."

not to interfere with the conscientious scruples of any citizen. In this country, provided the civil law is observed and a public nuisance is not created, men have as much liberty to worship "four-footed beasts and creeping things" as Jesus Christ.¹ The constitution of Minnesota in carrying out this principle of separating church and state, ordains that not one cent from the state treasury, and not one foot of public land shall be set apart for the teaching of any kind of religion in public institutions.² Bryce, in his recent work on the "American Commonwealth," mentions that it is "accepted as an axiom by all Americans that the civil power ought to be not only neutral and impartial as between different forms of faith, but ought to leave these matters entirely on one side, regarding them no more than it regards the literary or artistic pursuits of the citizens."

After the convention ended its labors Washington returned to his country home, but when the constitution was adopted by a certain number of states, it was ordered that there should be a vote for electors on the first of January, 1789, and that those chosen on the first Wednesday in February should meet and elect a president, and that at New York, as a temporary seat of government, on the fourth day of March, the first session of congress under the new constitution should be held. When the electoral votes were counted all were for George Washington, and he could not decline to accept such an expression of confidence.

1. Francis Wharton, in his work on "American Criminal Law," referring to certain cases he writes: "In most of them the courts throw out the declaration that Christianity is part of the common law, yet they all of them rest on grounds independent of this general position; for it is a common nuisance, and punishable as such by indictment at common law, to disturb the religious worship of others, or flagrantly or indecently insult their religious belief, no matter what be their creed. Thus it would be held indictable to wantonly disturb a congregation of Mormons or Jews or even Mohammedans."

Sedgwick, in "Construction of Statutory and Constitutional Law," observes: "Blasphemy is an indictable offense at common law; but no person is liable to be punished by the civil power, who refuses to embrace the doctrines or follow the precepts of Christianity. Our constitution extends the same protection to every form of religion and gives no preference to any."

Judge Cooley, in "Constitutional Limitations," writes: "Christianity, therefore, is not a part of the law of the land, in the sense that would entitle courts to take notice of and base their judgments upon it, except so far as they should find that its precepts had been incorporated in and thus become a component part of the law. * * * It is not toleration which is established in our system, but religious equality."

2. The constitution of Minnesota reads, as to public moneys (*Section 3, Article 8*): "But in no case shall the moneys derived as aforesaid, or any portion thereof, or any public moneys or property, be appropriated or used for the support of schools wherein the distinctive doctrines, creeds, or tenets of any particular Christian or other religious sect are promulgated or taught."

Recognizing that it was another critical period he left home with sadness to launch and steer the new ship of state on its first voyage. It was his desire that there should be no display on his journey, but the people would not have it so. When he reached Trenton on the Delaware, in place of the foe which he had charged in person during the campaign of 1776, were gathered a great multitude of the wives and daughters of the town and surrounding country, and as he entered the place he was met by a company of maidens clothed in white, with wreaths on their heads, strewing the road with flowers and singing an ode of welcome. The contrast between the past and present was so great that he was overwhelmed with emotion and never could forget the scene. A prominent lawyer there at that time had been a member of the Continental congress and also elected a delegate of the constitutional convention, and his family was musical.¹

One of his daughters became the mother of one of the venerable members of the Minnesota Commandery of the Loyal Legion, the colonel of the Second Minnesota Regiment, now Gen. Horatio P. Van Cleve, and there is every probability that his mother was one of those who greeted the president on that occasion. A flotilla of boats followed the barge which conveyed him from Elizabeth, N. J., to New York City, where the ships in the harbor were gay with colors, and he stepped ashore, amid the roar of artillery, the music of bands, and acclaim of thousands. The readers of Shakspeare must have recalled the words of the messenger in *Coriolanus*:

"The dumb men throng to see him and the blind
To hear him speak; matrons fling gloves
Upon him as he passed, the commons made
A shower, and thunder, with their caps and shouts."

He had not been many days in New York before he discovered a spirit of extravagance and imitation which, if indulged in, would simply degrade the republic to a Little Britain or a Little France.

1. William Churchill Houston was a native of South Carolina, a graduate of Princeton College. In 1771 was professor of mathematics and natural philosophy in that institution. As the British approached in November, 1776, he organized and commanded a company of troops. During 1779, 1780 and 1781 he was a member of the Continental congress. In 1783 he began the practice of law at Trenton. In 1786 he attended the conference at Annapolis which suggested the constitutional convention, but was prevented taking his seat in said body by ill health. His daughter, Louisa Anna, married a physician of Princeton, N. J., the father of Gen. H. P. Van Cleve of Minneapolis, Minn.

He therefore gave notice to his attendants that while his household affairs shall not be meanly conducted, that everything which would suggest the display of foreign courts must be avoided. A party in congress was disposed to give him some high-sounding title, like "His Serene Highness." By the efforts of his friends it was at length settled that he was not even to be designated as "His Excellency," but simply "The President."

Arrangements were made for his inauguration on the thirtieth of April, at a hall where a United States sub-treasury now is, and standing in an open balcony before the building, dressed in a cloth suit of American manufacture, the oath of office was administered by Chancellor Livingston; when stooping down with closed eyes he kissed the Bible, on a velvet cushion, held by the secretary of the senate, and congress and the immense crowd responded "Long live George Washington, President of the United States." Truly could it have been said that day in the words of a modern poet:¹

"The statesman-warrior, moderate, resolute,
Our greatest, yet with least pretense,
Rich in saving common sense,
And as the greatest only are,
In his simplicity, sublime."

Called to serve a second term, the eight years of his administration were years of care and great responsibility. Those whose prejudices against Great Britain led them to denounce the treaty of Jay, influenced the house of representatives to pass a resolution requesting him to send to them the papers relative thereto. With firmness and dignity he declined, and informed them that it was opposed to public policy, and that they had no right to make such a demand; that the constitution vested the power to make a treaty with the president, and when approved by the senate became a law, and that no assent thereto by the house of representatives was required.

The friends of the French revolution were indignant because he maintained a strict neutrality, and the minister plenipotentiary of France was rebuked for his flagrant insult to the laws of the republic. As the last year of his administration drew to a close he thought with pleasure of the day when his face would be again turned to his quiet home, Mt. Vernon.

1. Tennyson.

The twenty-second of February, 1797, was a memorable day in Philadelphia. The president's house was filled for hours by admiring citizens, and he was overcome by the manifestations of respect, and his wife was moved to tears. On Saturday, the fourth of March, John Adams, the new president, was inaugurated, and Washington attended as a private citizen. After the ceremony he walked to the residence of his successor, and was the first there to extend congratulations. A crowd gathered around the house, and when he came out escorted him to his own home with the wildest enthusiasm. It was his wish to leave the city with his family without any demonstration; but the light horse troop which had escorted him in 1775 on his way to the camp at Cambridge, and in 1787 when he came to the constitutional convention, claimed the privilege of attending him, and it was impossible to refuse.

The next year after his presidency the conduct of the directory of France was such that President Adams deemed it expedient to prepare for war, and, with the approval of the senate, appointed him "lieutenant general and commander-in-chief" of the army. Believing that the country was endangered, he accepted the responsibility with the proviso that he should not take the field until there was an obvious necessity, and that he should receive no emolument until war expenses were incurred. Happily war was averted.

He expired on the fourteenth of December, 1799, and the last year of his life was passed in the improvement of his mind and estate. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee, now governor of Virginia, in a recent address, said that John Randolph, of Roanoke, when a student, witnessed the inauguration of Washington as president, and then declared that "there was poison under the wing of the eagle," referring to slavery as a disturbing influence.

Washington had carefully read Montesquieu's work, and believed with the French philosopher that "the very earth itself, which teems with profusion under the cultivating hand of the free-born laborer, shrinks into barrenness from the contaminating sweat of the slave," and he felt that the country was in danger as long as African servitude existed.

Coke, a student of Oxford University and the first superintendent of Methodist missions in America, thus describes a visit to Washington at Mt. Vernon: "He received us very politely, and was very

open to access. He is quite the plain country gentleman. After dinner we desired a private interview, and opened to him the grand business on which we came, presenting to him our petition for the emancipation of the negroes, and entreating his signature, if the eminence of his station did not render it inexpedient for him to sign any petitions. He informed us that he was of our sentiments, and had signified his thoughts on the subject to most of the great men of the state; that he did not see it proper to sign the petition, but if the assembly took it into consideration he would signify his sentiments by a letter. He asked us to spend the evening and lodge at his house, but our engagements would not admit."

To the last he was adapted for every emergency. He was never found trying to impress any one that he was a hero, a statesman, or a saint. He desired no halo painted around his head. At the time of his death Talleyrand was minister of foreign affairs in France, and in a manuscript recently discovered he has drawn this accurate pen portrait: "History offers few examples of such renown. Great from the outset of his career, patriotic before his country became a nation, despite the passions and political resentments that desired to check his career, his fame remained imperishable. His public actions, and unassuming grandeur in private life, were living examples of courage, wisdom and usefulness."

The contemplation of such a life has been of untold value to the American people. In the wilderness of Indiana a poor boy went to school in a rude log cabin, and one day borrowed from the teacher a memoir of Washington. As he read he was fascinated, and at length "by pulling fodder for three days" he became the owner of the book. When the legislatures of several states began to declare that the general government could not coerce their citizens, that poor boy, become a full man, Abraham Lincoln, was chosen president of the United States of America. In bidding farewell to his neighbors at Springfield, Ill., before entering upon his duties, he said: "A duty devolves upon me which is, perhaps, greater than that which has devolved upon any other man since the days of Washington. He never would have succeeded except for the aid of Divine Providence, upon which he at all times relied. I feel that I can not succeed without that aid, and I pray that I may receive that divine assistance."

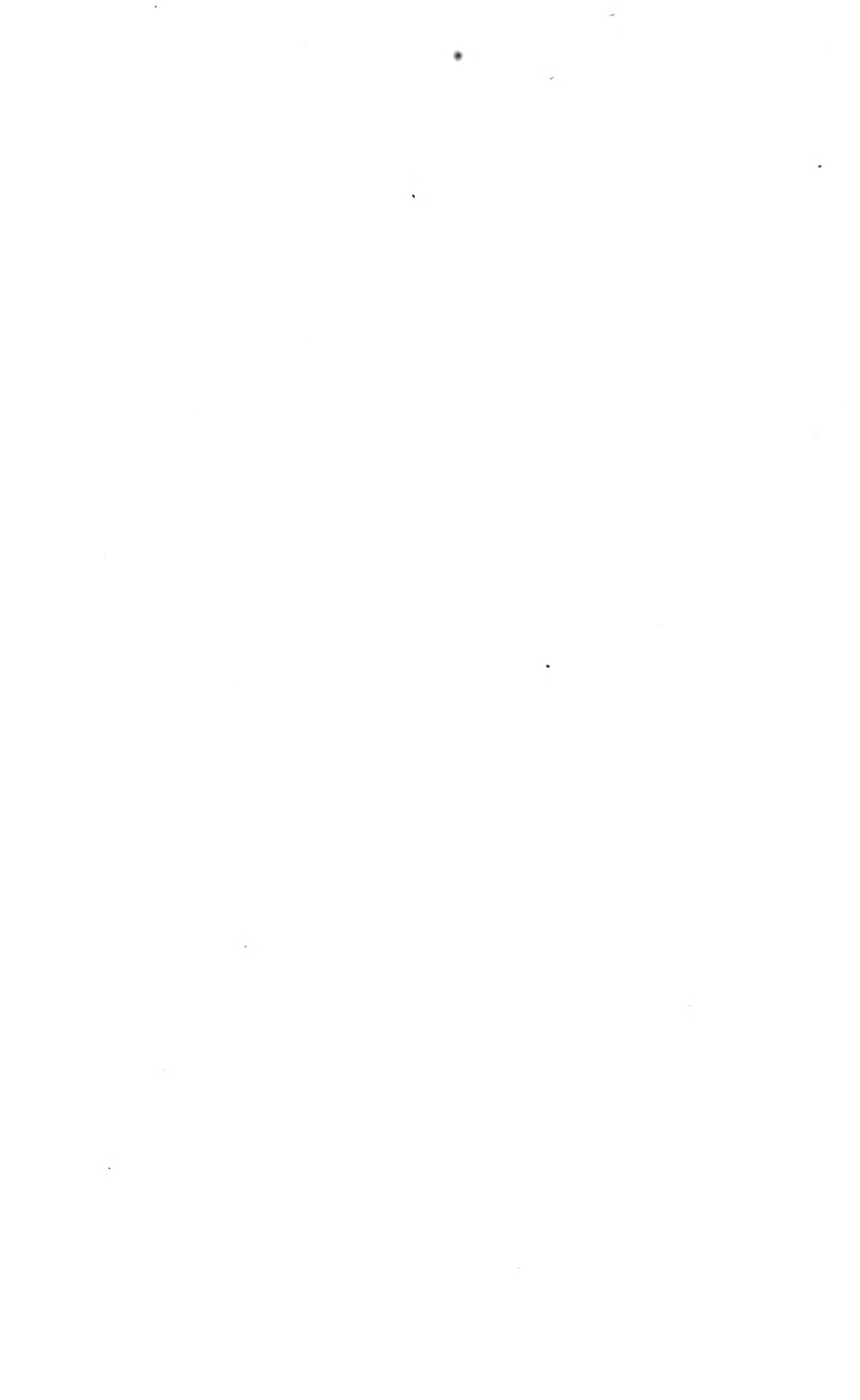
Comrades of the Minnesota Commandery of the Loyal Legion! During the administration of President Lincoln you were commissioned as officers of the army, which after fearful struggles saved the nation's life. From the day when the army of the Union after victory marched in front of the president's mansion in Washington, where Lincoln's chair had been made vacant by an assassin's shot, and from thence you hurried back to your farms, warehouses, workshops and professional offices, the era of sectionalism has expired, and a new era of nationality has commenced.

Thank God that it is no longer your duty to bear arms, but do not forget that one of the important objects of your association is to inculcate patriotism. Impress upon your children and children's children the horrors of civil war, but teach them all to say: "If I forget thee, O America! let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth."

4







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